



Letter to the Editor

The *Journal* welcomes letters in good taste on any topic. All letters must be signed with the writer's correct signature and include the address and telephone number for our verification. Letters should be on a single subject and no longer than 200 words. Letters of any length may be trimmed.

Send to: Letters to the Editor, Hawaii Medical Journal, 1360 S. Beretania St., Second Floor, Honolulu, HI 96814.

Dear Dr Goldstein:

Thank you for the copy of the *Journal*, which contained your editorial reflections on the Legislature and the legislative process.

I suppose everyone wants to be appreciated, but I find it especially refreshing when the observer is part of a profession that also is very much in the public eye.

Great events are afoot in Hawaii and the nation as we consider how best to deliver health care. Your recommendations are and will continue to be a big help.

Sincerely,
Norman Mizuguchi
President of the Senate
State of Hawaii



Editorial Norman Goldstein MD

Mice are not men!

When a study was published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* dealing with enhanced growth of melanoma and fibrosarcoma in mice by three antihistamines, pharmacists', allergists' and dermatologists' phones went "off the hook" with patient queries.

Hydroxyzine (Atarax) has been available for many years. Two newer and very popular antihistamines, loratadine (Claritin) and astemizole (Hismanal) and hydroxyzine were injected into mice. The mice developed larger tumors faster than controls.

The Food and Drug Administration and the manufacturers of these antihistamines are doing more extensive studies as a result of the work done at the Manitoba Institute of Cellular Biology.

The wire services picked up this *hot news item* and got the fear message out even before the *Journal* was available in Hawaii. We could not even get the *Journal* paper via MEDLINE or Fax for a few days, but CNN-TV and our daily newspapers had the story the next day!

At this time, there is no reason to stop prescribing these very effective antihistamines. Dr Lorne Brandes, the lead researcher for the Canadian team, said patients, "should use them for as short a period as possible, and only when really needed." Good advice, Dr Brandes, not just for these drugs, but of all medications.

Norman Goldstein MD, Editor

Autism in Hawaii

In 1992 the Hawaii State Legislature created an autism project in order to help the state adapt to the new and hopeful knowledge about autism that affects diagnosis, treatment and patient outcome. The recognition of autism and the developmental disorders as static encephalopathies which can often be dramatically improved by rehabilitative and special educational services (analogous to stroke victims), has led to the awareness that many of the severely handicapping aspects of autism are in fact preventable, and that early screening and intervention can save parents a great deal of misery and the state great savings in the costs of institutional care.

As part of the 4th annual autism educational workshop on "*Autism...Building Bridges Together*" to be held at the Hawaii Prince Hotel in August, the HMA, American Academy of Pediatrics—Hawaii Chapter, and the Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association will present a special program for physicians on autism.

Guest speakers at the program from 6 pm to 8 pm on Thursday, August 4, 1994 will be B.J. Freeman PhD from UCLA Medical Center and David Homes, director of the New Jersey Eden Family of Services.

The July issue of the *Journal* will feature a manuscript by L. Poon, N. Partika and W. Bolman on *Autism in Hawaii: New Hope in the Treatment of Autism in Hawaii*.

The authors hope that the presence of an autism project in Hawaii, combined with aroused community awareness, will allow Hawaii to adopt the prevention and cost-effective models present in New Jersey, California and North Carolina.

These family and community-based coordinated service systems utilize both autism-specific and generic disability services in order to provide a full range of service options for persons with autism. Such a system not only can prevent the needless handicap in the higher functioning autistic child, but also maintain the more severely impaired, low functioning autistic child in the community.

Hawaii is now moving in this direction. It is hoped that physicians will support these efforts.

The special program for physicians will be held at the HMA office. Call 536-7702 or Fax 528-2376 for information and reservations.

Norman Goldstein MD, Editor

Horticultural Activities at the Hawaii Medical Library

Physicians who only use phone, fax and computer searches to the Hawaii Medical Library and do not have the opportunity to visit our library are missing the developing *Hawaii Healing Plant Garden*.

The rear courtyard is being transformed into a living permanent display of plants which had accepted medicinal uses in traditional Hawaiian medicine and were either indigenous to the Hawaiian Islands or Polynesian introductions.

The following plants are now growing well in the garden:

► Continued on Page 173